THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Information in this regard is not maintained.

(c) There is no scheme under consideration to impart military training to all students.

Avert of mid air Collision

624. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a major mid air collision involving an IAF Itushyin-76 and a Navy Tupoler-142M, aricraft was averted by sheer luck;

(b) whether the aircrafts were separated by 600 feet only which is suicidal in aeronautical terms as the two were flying on top of each other; and

(c) whether IL-76 is ill suited for low flying and TU-142M, is used only for low level surveillance over sea?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) on 26th January, 2000, as part of the Republic Day Parade flypast, a formation of three TU-142M aircraft of Navy overtook the IAF's Big Boy formation of IL-76, AN-32 and Dornier aircrafts, as they flew past the saluting dais. There was no danger of a mid air collision. The TU formation had the IL formation in sight from the time of leaving the holding position and ensured that adequate vertical separation was maintained through out.

(b) At the time of overtake, the two formations were separated vertically by 600 feet. There was adequate safety due to the reasons that the IAF's Big Boy formation was flying straight and level at a height of 1000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) whereas the TU-142 formation was climbing passing 1600 feet AGL when it crossed above the Big Boy formation. Further, both the formations were well aware of the air situation. As per international regulations, a vertical separation of only 1000 ft between reciprocal traffic and 500 ft otherwise is acceptable.

(c) The IL-76 is used for many different low flying exercises by the IAF, and all its crew are competent to undertake such exercises. The TU-142M aircraft is a long range reconnaissance aircraft, that operates at all levels.